

Singapore

Molester who tried to flee S'pore jailed

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312 words

28 December 2006

[Straits Times](#)

STIMES

English

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FACED with the prospect of jail for molesting his friend's young daughter, an Indian national tried to flee Singapore on a fake passport.

But his escape was foiled by an alert immigration officer who saw through the ruse and detained him.

Yesterday, Chinnadurai Govindaraj, 36, a driver with an engineering firm, was punished for both offences. He was jailed 15 months and sentenced to three strokes of the rotan.

A district court heard how Chinnadurai was stopped in the departure hall at Woodlands Checkpoint on Nov 24 at about 10.30pm.

He presented an Indian passport to an immigration officer for departure clearance.

The passport was authentic but the officer spotted telltale signs that Chinnadurai's photograph was tacked on.

He was detained and he later confessed that he had bought the passport for \$1,000 through a contact whose real identity was unknown to him.

He claimed the man had told him he would have no problem leaving Singapore as the photograph of the rightful holder of the passport had been replaced with one of him.

Chinnadurai admitted to immigration officers later that he wanted to skip town because he was under investigation for molesting the eight-year-old daughter of his friend.

He had turned up at the friend's apartment earlier this year for dinner.

He ate as he watched a movie on television and was soon joined by the girl on the sofa. While watching the movie, he touched the child inappropriately.

The child was too shocked to do anything and told her parents only after Chinnadurai had left the apartment.

Chinnadurai pleaded for leniency from the court, saying he had to return to India to look after his aged mother and six-year-old daughter.

He could have been jailed up to two years.